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After the plants have attained the height of about 6 in., they are earthed up. When the leaves turn yellow, it is a sign that the potatoes are ripe. The different kinds of sweet potatoes grown and the yam and another kind of esculent root—*u sohphlang* (*Flemingia vestita Benth.*) will be noticed under the head of "Crops." 244

The Khasis possess very few agricultural sayings and proverbs, but the following may be quoted as examples:— 241 538

(1) *Wat ju ai thung jingthung ne bet symbai ka uba sniew kti.*

Do not allow plants to be planted or seeds to be sown by one who has a bad hand. [177]

As elsewhere, there is a belief amongst the Khasis that some people's touch as regards agriculture is unlucky. [124]

(2) *Thung dieng ne bet symbai kaba ngen bnai, ym kaba shai u bnai.*

Plant trees or sow seeds not when the moon is waxing, but when it is on the wane.

(3) *Wei la saw bha ka bneng sepngi jan miet phin sa ich jingrang lashai.*

A red sky in the west in the evening is the sign of fine weather to-morrow.

Cf. our English proverb "a red sky in the morning is a shepherd's warning, a red sky at night is a shepherd's delight."

## CROPS.

The varieties of rice found in the Khasi Hills are divided into two main classes, one grown as a dry crop on high lands, and the other raised in valleys and hollows which are artificially irrigated from hill streams. The lowland rice is more productive than that grown on high lands, the average per acre of the former, according to the agricultural bulletin, as ascertained from the results of 817 experimental crop cuttings carried out during the fifteen years preceding the year 1898, being 11.7 maunds of paddy per acre, as against an average of 9.4 maunds per acre (resulting from 667 cuttings made during the 243 433

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Mr. Jenkins, in his interesting little work on "Life and
753 Work in Khasia," gives a slightly different account of the
796 superstition, in that he states that it is the sick person who
826 is possessed by *ka Tarah*. The above belief is perhaps a
164 Synteng development of the Khasi *thlen* superstition. In
177 the Jaintia Hills "the small-pox" is believed to be a goddess, and is reverenced accordingly. Syntengs regard it as an honour to have had small-pox, calling the marks left by the disease the "kiss of the goddess"; the more violent the attack and the deeper the marks, the more highly honoured is the person affected. Mr. Jenkins says, "When the goddess has entered a house, and smitten any person or persons with this disease, a trough of clean water is placed outside the door, in order that every one before entering may wash their feet therein, the house being considered sacred." Mr. Rita mentions cases of women washing their hair in water used by a small-pox patient, in order that they may contract the disease, and women have been known actually to bring their little children into the house of a small-pox patient, in order that they may become infected and thus receive the kiss of the goddess. It is possible that the Syntengs, who were for some time under Hindu influences, may in their ignorance have adopted this degraded form of worship of the Hindu goddess, "Sitala Devi," who is adored as a divine mother under different names by Hindus all over India: cf., her name *mari-amman*, or mother of death, in the South of India, and the name Ai, mother, of the Assamese.

In the Khasi Hills the god of small-pox is known under the name of *u Siem ñiang thylliew*. He is not, however, appeased in any way, the people calling on two other spirits, *Thynrei* and *Sapa*, to whom a fowl or a goat is offered.

776 This section cannot be closed without some reference to the
773 household gods of the Syntengs. The legend is that in ancient times there came a woman "from the end of heaven to the borders of the country of *u Trah*" (the country of the plains people at a distance from the foot of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills). The name of the woman was Ka Taben, and she was accompanied by her children. She offered herself to *u Dkhar*, the plains man, as a household goddess, but he rejected her. She then went to the Khasis, who were ploughing their fields,

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144 'ETHNOLOGY.—In order to determine the ethnological position of the Khásiás, we need dwell upon a few only of their physical characteristics, viz. those which are held to indicate that type of the human family, the Mongolian, to which they undoubtedly belong. A detailed description of their physiognomy would embrace forms and characters by no means common even to tribes occupying the hills in close proximity to them, much less referable to all branches of the Mongolian stock. These differences in detail, which may be attributed mainly to local influences, render it extremely difficult, if not absolutely impossible, to trace out the exact relation which these mountain tribes bear to each other. But the Mongolian, or to use a more comprehensive term, the Turanian, physiognomy is unmistakeable in them all—Khásiás, Jáintiás, Gáros, Mikirs, Nágás, Manipuris, etc. The chief points may be briefly stated as follows:—

142 [141] [302] Colour tawny or yellow, though a darker hue is not entirely unknown; nose somewhat depressed, with a peculiar conformation towards the forehead at the glabellum, which is very flat and broad; face broad, flat, and squarish, with high and rounded cheek-bones; skull globular rather than square; eyes middle-sized and black, with a yellow tinge in the eyeball; eyelids obliquely set, but less acutely than in the Chinese and other Indo-Chinese races; mouth large, with prominent though not very thick lips; hair black, thick, and worn long, the orthodox style being to tie it up in a knot at the back, varying little with sex; beard remarkably sparse, but the

141 moustache more abundant than the beard. The lower classes go

• [826] bare-headed; stature low in the majority of cases; constitution strong and robust; limbs thick, short, and stout; trunk long in proportion and very broad at the waist; calves over-developed, but this is considered an element of beauty, more especially in the women, who, on the average, are fairer and handsomer than the men; carriage ungraceful.

157 'SOCIAL AND MORAL QUALITIES.—Disposition very affable, gentle, and cheerful; rather industrious, but devoid of ingenuity and mechanical skill. In the industrial arts, such as masonry, carpentry,

291 and agriculture, they are amenable to training. Dress amongst the lower classes is confined to a fringed jacket rudely woven of hemp, extending down as far as the thighs, and leaving the arms bare, together with a scanty covering for the loins. The more respectable classes wear a turban of coarse cotton or silk for a head-dress, and a sheet of silk thrown loosely over the shoulders, together with a long